



Lady Carlotta and the Devil's Punchbowl

illustrated by
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SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Carlotta's daughter, Elizabeth Aerial, aged 7 years, pleaded to make the ascension, and her parents concluded to let her go.

Little Bessie and her mother raced against Professor Leon Dare, a gymnast. When the signal was given, the anchors were cast off and both balloons soared straight up into the clear sky.

From the moment Professor Dare left the earth he began performing evolutions on the bar of his trapeze, holding on by one hand.

Hanging by his knee, he waved to the gaping crowd with a handkerchief.

Mme Carlotta and her brave little girl extended salutations as earnest, but not quite so aerobatic, to the rapidly disappearing crowd of 35,000 spectators.

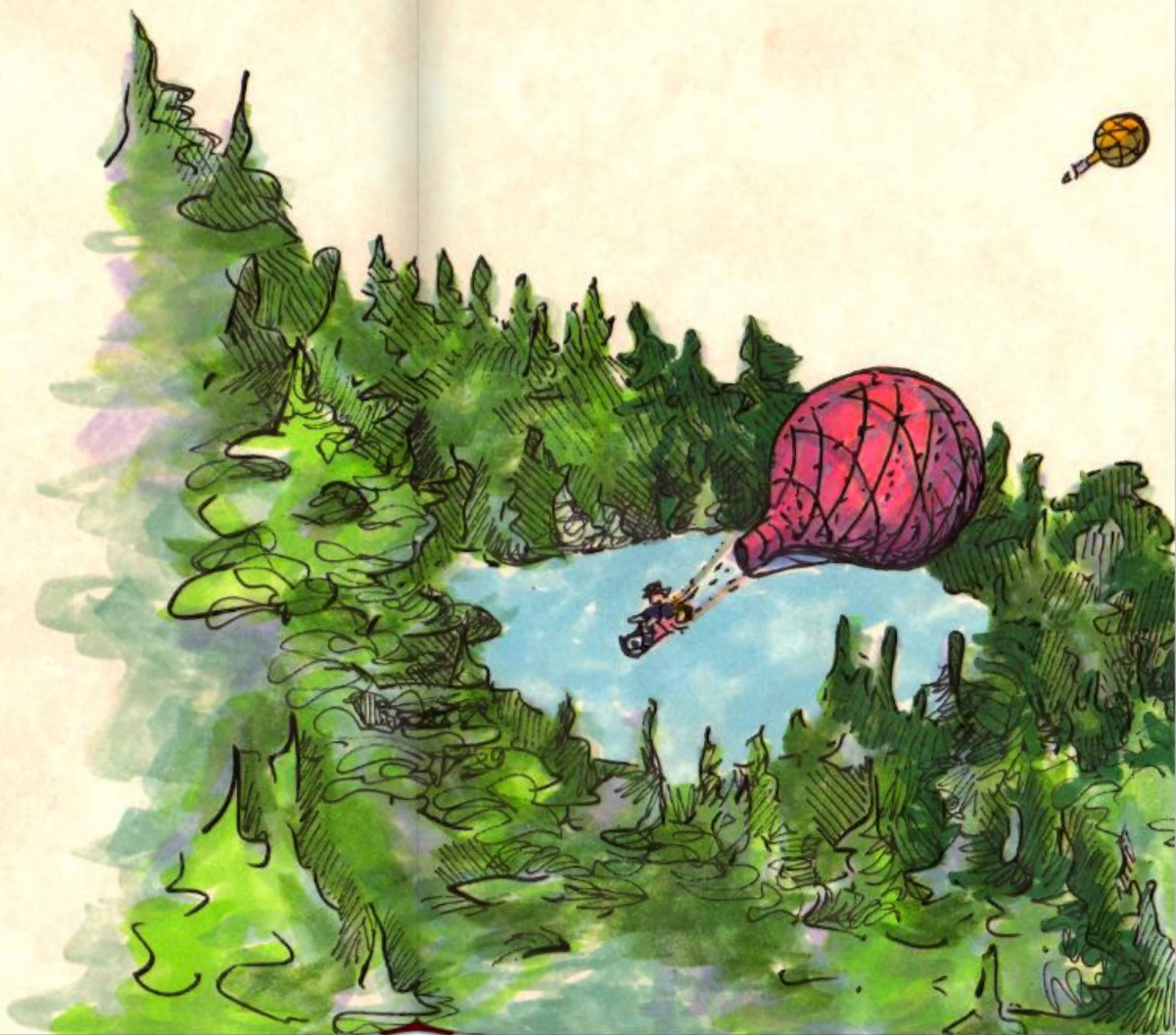


The balloons were carried due east for about half an hour.

Professor Dare had attained a lead of $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or so when suddenly a strong wind struck Mme Carlotta's balloon.

Without warning, she and her little daughter found themselves sucked into a deep ravine.

Below lay the small, steep-sided lake known locally as "The Devil's Punchbowl."





The balloon struck the water.

Alarmed for the safety of her child, and having no ballast, Carlotta threw overboard her thick ulster.

The balloon rose for a second, but sank again into the water with such force that it rebounded and sank once more.

Large trees overhung the shore, and Carlotta could not get the balloon near enough to reach dry land.

Carlotta and her little girl clung to the balloon netting for nearly an hour. When a tree limb came close, Carlotta caught hold of it. At last, help arrived in the form of two passers-by, who steered a small boat near enough to effect a rescue.



Elizabeth Aerial never went up in a balloon again.

SOURCES

Bassett Preston R. "Carlotta, The Lady Aeronaut of the Mohawk Valley", New York History, April 1963.

"Aerial Adventure Of Carlotta, The Lady Aeronaut," American Heritage Magazine, August 1966.

"It Was Balloon Day," Syracuse Standard, Thurs. Sept. 27, 1888, p 6.

"The Lost Balloon," New York Times, September 30, 1888.

This sequence was
part of a longer piece
submitted to
The Sketchbook Project 2011
on the theme
"In Flight."
The original is in
The Brooklyn Art Library
in New York City
and can be viewed in its entirety
on their website
www.sketchbookproject.com/brooklynartlibrary

The illustrations were done
with Prismacolour pens on paper.

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Cover: (Detail) Panoramic Map of East Syracuse, New York, by L. R.
Burleigh, 1885, from Panoramic Maps 1847-1921 [online database],
American Memory project, Library of Congress.

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